

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7169

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 602

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: BEXP  
SUBJECT: POSSIBILITIES FOR AGROBUSINESS IN MAURITANIA

TO: MORTON G. YUTER  
VICE PRESIDENT  
INTERTEX INTERNATIONAL  
270 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY 10016

WAS PAINFULLY EMBARRASSED TO DISCOVER LATE LAST WEEK, DAY OR TWO BEFORE MS. WALKER'S FOLLOWUP ARRIVED, THAT YOUR JANUARY LETTER HAD BEEN PUSHED OFF TO ONE SIDE DURING HANDOVER FROM DEPARTING TO ARRIVING EMBASSY STAFFER. MY APOLOGIES.

DR.BOCAR ALPHA BA AND HIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATES COMPRISE THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SOPHISTICATED GROUP OF PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN IN MAURITANIA. COLLECTIVELY THEY POSSESS BROAD KNOWLEDGE OF WIDE RANGE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY (INCLUDING FRANCHISE REPRESENTATION OF VARIETY OF CSUMER PRODUCTS, DURABLES (E.G. LAND ROVER) AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT; HOTELING; FISHERIES), PLUS CLOSE PERSONNAL ASSOCIATION WITH KEY PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENTAL DECISION MAKERS. DR. BA WAS RECENTLY DESIGNATED CHAIRMAN OF SERVICE ENTERPRISES SUB-COMMITTEE OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. ABOVE ALL, DR. BA AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE FIRST GROUP TO SEE IMPORTANCE AND PROFIT POTENTIAL OF DIRECT PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN MAURITANIAN ECONO-  
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MIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.EQUALLY IMPORTANT, HAVING PERCEIVED MONEYMAKING POSSIBILITIES OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT, THEY HAVE SET ABOUT TO EXPLOIT THIS POTENTIAL WITH IMAGINATION, SKILL, VIGOR AND PERSISTENCE. MAURITANIA IS AT VERY BEGINNING OF DEVELOPMENT ROAD. FRENCH LEFT VERY LITTLE IN WAY OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS. PRIMARY LIMITING FACTOR IMPEDING DE-

VELOPMENT IS NOT RPT NOT LACK OF CAPITAL BUT SCARCITY OF TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED MANPOWER. AGRICULTURE SECTOR IS NO EXCEPTION, SCATTERED AROUND COUNTRY ARE IRRIGATED PERIMETERS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS WHICH OPERATE INEFFECTIVELY OR NOT AT ALL BECAUSE PROJECT PLANNERS FAILED TO INCLUDE TRAINING COMPONENT AS INTEGRAL ELEMENT. THUS THERE IS CRITICAL AND URGENT NEED FOR TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL EXPERTISE WHICH COMPANY SUCH AS YOURS COULD BRING TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT IN MAURITANIA. AT PRESENT THERE IS NO AGROBUSINESS ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIA. BUT POTENTIAL IS VERY GREAT--IMMEDIATELY IN SENEGAL RIVER VALLEY (IRRIGATED FARMING), LATER IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN AREAS (COMBINATION DRY LAND AND RUNOFF CONSERVATION CULTIVATION). NOTABLE SUCCESS OF AMERICAN AGROBUSINESS EFFORT JUST SOUTH OF RIVER IN SENEGAL IS MEASURE OF WHAT COULD BE DONE HERE. TO DATE EXTENSIVE EFFORTS OF MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT AND VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL DONORS HAVE PRODUCED LITTLE DEVELOPMENT AND DISAPPOINTINGLY LITTLE NET ADDITION TO OUTPUT. ONLY SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN COUNTRY IS FREE ENTERPRISE, FAMILY-OWNED 250 HECTARE FARM IN VALLEY WHICH IS OUTSTANDING AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL SUCCESS. IT IS IMPRESSIVE DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT RIGHT MIX OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL EXPERTISE PLUS PROFIT MOTIVE CAN PRODUCE IN MAURITANIA.

HAVE NO DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT COTTON PROJECT OR FEASIBILITY STUDY. PRESS RELEASE ON MARCH 17 CABINET MEETING NOTED CABINET HAD HEARD REPORT ON JANUARY MEETING.  
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ING OF MAURITANIAN-LIBYAN JOINT COMMISSION WHICH APPROVED CREATION OF MIXED COMPANY TO DEVELOP GROWING OF COTTON AND SUGARCANE. YOU MAY WISH TO RENEW YOUR REQUEST TO DR. BA FOR FEASIBILITY DOCUMENT.

AS PART OF BROADER SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM NOW BEING PLANNED AND MOUNTED BY SEVEN STATES OF AREA AND INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF DONORS, U.S. IS GRADUALLY TRANSFORMING ITS EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF FOOD PROGRAM IN MAURITANIA INTO CLASSIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EFFORT. IN ADDITION TO MAJOR LIVESTOCK PROJECT AND SERIES OF SMALLER REFORESTATION, CROP PROTECTION, VEGETABLE-GROWING PROJECTS WHICH WE ARE ABOUT TO LAUNCH, US IS PREPARING TO CARRY OUT 18-24 MONTH RURAL ASSESSMENT STUDY TO DEFINE AND EVALUATE AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL; TO DEVISE SECTOR DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY, PULLING TOGETHER ALL ACTIVITIES/ POLICIES (LOCAL PRODUCTION, IMPORTATION, STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION, CREDIT, TAXATION, ETC.) WHICH STRUCTURE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT; AND TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC

PROJECTS TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY ADOPTED. TELEPHONE CALL OR PERSONAL VISIT WITH STATE DEPARTMENT DESK OFFICER DALTON KILLION (202-632-2865) WILL ENABLE YOU TO OBTAIN MORE DETAILS ABOUT USAID PROGRAM HERE PLUS INFORMATION ABOUT PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES, GENERAL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SCENE, AND ABOUT ON-GOING SAHARA GUERRILLA WAR.

A WORD FINALLY ABOUT PRIVATE BUSINESS CLIMATE. MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT WANTS VIGOROUS PRIVATE SECTOR, WARMLY ENCOURAGES PRIVATE BUSINESS EFFORTS, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, AND HAS ESTABLISHED FRIENDLY REGULATORY CLIMATE. US INVESTMENTS HERE CAN BE COVERED BY OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION. AT PRESENT THERE ARE ONLY TWO AMERICAN COMPANIES RESIDENT IN MAURITANIA, ONE BUILDING A SUGAR REFINERY AND THE OTHER MAINTAINING AIRCRAFT OF NATIONAL AIRLINE.  
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VERY MUCH HOPE INTERTEX WILL IN VERY NEAR FUTURE SEND FRENCH-SPEAKING REPRESENTATIVE TO INVESTIGATE COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES IN MAURITANIA AT FIRST HAND.

AMERICAN EMBASSY  
NOUAKCHOTT, MAURITANIA

HANDYSIDE

NOTE BY OC/T: PASSED ABOVE ADDEE.

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